



Environmental Health

Tarrant County Public Health

Environmental Health functions in a regulatory capacity regarding health issues linked to the environment and provides a variety of related services. In addition to conducting food handler classes, permitting food vendors and regularly inspecting public eating establishments, Environmental Health also provides education and information on local environmental issues such as air quality and ozone, permits on-site sewage facilities, and inspects and permits public swimming pools.

Air Quality/Ozone Education

The Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex is one of numerous Texas communities which are participating in the Ozone Forecast Program. Environmental Health offers information and consulting services related to air quality and ozone, regularly monitors local air quality and will issue health warnings to the public when appropriate. Information about ozone forecast accuracy and other program statistics are available online (see web address on back).

Food Handler Classes

Many cities in Tarrant County require individuals working in public food establishments to receive basic food handler training in safety measures involved with preparing food. Environmental Health provides this training at a variety of times and locations throughout the county. Classes currently last one hour, excluding time needed for paperwork and testing. Call 817-321-4960 for class information and to reserve a seat.

Food Establishment Inspections & Permits

Environmental Health regulates food establishments in the unincorporated areas of the County, 31 Tarrant County cities and the DFW International Airport. This involves the inspection and permitting of both restaurants and mobile food vendors. Most food establishments are inspected at least twice a year—in some cases more often if needed. The extent of the food service (limited versus full service), special populations with compromised immunity or a history of inspection problems can cause an increased inspection rate. Environmental Health provides food service permits for restaurants, food store permits for grocery stores, etc. and temporary permits for limited food preparation, at a maximum of 14 days in conjunction with a special event or celebration.

On-site Sewage Facilities

The Tarrant County Commissioners Court is authorized by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) to oversee on-site wastewater disposal systems in Tarrant County. Environmental Health is the designated representative for the Court to oversee these



systems. Environmental Health is also contracted to inspect facilities for several cities. All new systems, changes or repairs to old systems require a permit prior to any work to be done. Water systems are inspected by TCEQ. For more information about water system inspections, call TCEQ at 817-588-5800.

Pool Permits

Environmental Health permits and inspects pools in unincorporated areas of Tarrant County and in 23 local cities. Pools are inspected twice during the swimming season to ensure compliance with state safety regulations.

Stormwater Runoff Program

This federal program requires counties and cities throughout the nation to maintain or improve water quality in local bodies of water that receive stormwater runoff. This is accomplished through local pollution control programs that are permitted by state or federal governments. For details regarding these programs and the permits required, call 817-321-4960.

Texas SmartScape

As a result of studies showing increased residential pollutants in local creeks and rivers, TCPH, in conjunction with the North Central Texas Council of Governments and many other organizations, has created the Texas SmartScape. Available online, Texas SmartScape was developed to help guide homeowners and gardeners in the use of native and adaptive plants in their landscapes. Containing an extensive listing of assorted attractive plants that require little or no pesticides or fertilizers to grow, the Texas SmartScape is a great help in cultivating environmentally friendly landscapes. Many of the plants featured require less water and will also attract butterflies and hummingbirds, thus improving local habitat. As more homeowners switch to these environmentally friendlier landscapes, residential pollutants that wash into local creeks and rivers will likewise be reduced. TexasSmartScape information also can be found at <http://www.txsmartscape.com>.

For more information, call: 817-321-4960 or visit us online at <http://health.tarrantcounty.com>